

West Valley View

The community newspaper of Avondale, Buckeye, Goodyear, Litchfield Park & Tolleson, AZ

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I-10 Reliever meetings draw questions and concerns

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staff writer

The Arizona Department of Transportation hosted two public meetings last week to outline preliminary plans for a new freeway that would relieve future traffic congestion on Interstate 10.

Plans for the I-10 Reliever Project, as ADOT is calling it, are in the beginning stages, said Matt Burdick, the department's public information officer.

The reliever is part of the Regional Transportation Plan drawn up by local government officials and approved last November by voters.

"Basically, this is a new route to provide an alternative for people in the Southwest Valley," Burdick said. "It's planned to extend from the South Mountain Freeway — wherever that is ultimately located — west to the 303 and, in the future, plans call for it to extend further west out to State Route 85."

The proposed South Mountain Freeway route has yet to be determined. Options for connection with I-10 in Ahwatukee exist at 55th or 71st avenues in Phoenix or 99th Avenue between Tolleson and Avondale.

The exact location of the I-10 Reliever still is unknown, too, but ADOT has released a study area that is broken up into two phases for geographical purposes.

The first phase uses the northern boundary of Lower Buckeye Road and the southern boundary of the Salt and Gila rivers, as well as the eastern boundary of 51st Avenue and the western boundary of Perryville Road.

Phase two of the study eventually will pick up from Perryville Road and work it's way west near SR 85, Burdick said.

"The study area varies because it falls in the banks of the rivers, and it also runs into the Goodyear Airport," he said. "We have a study area that we're looking at, but we don't have a specific path. We may look at a number of different options."

Project is just beginning

Determining what other environmental entities and developments already exist or are planned to be built in the study area is all part of the project's first stage — information gathering.

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Interactive Poll

Because many people have complained about dust in the area, do you think the Maricopa County Flood Control District or some other government agency should prohibit off-road vehicles from driving in the Gila River bottom in the vicinity of Estrella Parkway?

Please select one:

- ☐ Yes
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"Based upon that information, we can begin to try to assess what the paths of least resistance are," Burdick said.

The next two to three years will be spent drawing up an environmental and engineering study before definite plans for the freeway can begin.

According to the Regional Transportation Plan, construction on the I-10 Reliever Project will fall between the years 2021 and 2026, Burdick said.

However, the lengthy time frame did not keep area residents from asking questions and voicing concerns during a Sept. 29 public meeting at Tolleson's Union Elementary School.

Ginger and Jim Bryant of Tolleson are most concerned about a reduction in their property value and the potentially high noise levels the I-10 Reliever might bring.

"We just moved away from an area with freeway noise [the Crystal Gardens development in Avondale], and we don't want to hear another freeway," Ginger said.

Joanne and Garlin Eads, who live in unincorporated Maricopa County near El Mirage Road and Southern Avenue, understand the need for the I-10 Reliever, but worry about where it will be located.

"I'm not against the road — they have to put it somewhere," Garlin said. "I just don't want it on top of my house. But, ultimately, this isn't up to us. It's up to ADOT."

Concerned residents are encouraged to submit comments through the mail to Heather Honsberger, HDR Engineering Inc., at 3200 E. Camelback Road, Suite 350, Phoenix, AZ, 85018, or via e-mail at heather.honsberger@hdrinc.com.

ADOT will host future meetings in the area on the I-10 Reliever Project as well, but no dates have been announced.

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